The Scientific Study of Sleep, Dreaming and Dream Interpretation

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Schedule of topics:

Week 1

Introduction to Sleep and Dreaming:

*The study of sleep and dreams is a surprisingly new discipline, with the “official” discovery of Rapid Eye Movements Sleep in 1953 marking the beginning of the scientific study of sleep. In this introductory lecture, we will cover how sleep and dreams have been viewed across different cultures and times, and the fundamentals of scientific study of sleep and dreaming.*

Week 2

Why Do We Sleep Part 1: The Sleeping Body and Brain

*In our second lecture we will begin to tackle the question of “Why do we sleep?” We will cover normal variation in sleep patterns as well as the kinds of physical changes our body and brain go through during sleep.*

Week 3

Why Do We Sleep Part 2: Sleep Deprivation and Sleep Disorders

*Much of our society is sleep deprived, even though this is typically caused by our life-styles, other times it is the result of disorders. This lecture will cover common sleep disorders, as well as the consequences of sleep deprivation. We will continue trying to answer the question of “why we sleep?” by looking at what happens when we don’t sleep.*

Week 4

Why do we Dream: The Sleeping Mind

*In our fourth meeting, we will transition from sleeping to dreaming. We will explore scientific theories and possible functions dreaming, attempting to answer “Why does everyone always dream every night?”*

**Did you know?** Your registration in the LinR program allows you to borrow materials from Carleton University’s MacOdrum Library. To receive a temporary borrowing card, visit the circulation desk and identify yourself as a participant of LinR.
Time permitting, we will begin our group dream interpretation during the second half of this lecture.

Week 5

Dream Interpretation:

Since dreams come from you, they often hold important content about you and your life. This lecture will discuss the prominent theories of dream interpretation.

We will continue interpreting dreams as a class this lecture.

Week 6

Scientific study of dreams:

Contrary to popular belief, dreams are a valid topic for scientific investigation. This lecture will explore the science and theories of dreams as well as why everyone dreams.

We will continue interpreting dreams as a class.

Recommended readings for continued learning:

Living Your Dreams by Dr. Gayle Delaney, 1996

Understanding Sleep and Dreaming by Dr. William Moorcroft, 2005

Other interesting resources:

For those who experience insomnia, I recommend:

Mindfulness for Insomnia: A Four-Week Guided Program to Relax Your Body, Calm Your Mind, and Get the Sleep You Need by Catherine Orzech and Dr. William Moorcroft, 2019

For those interested in learning more about dream interpretation, I recommend collection of life-changing dreams with self-interpretations, which may aid self-interpretation:

Dreams That Change Our Lives by The International Association for the Study of Dreams, 2017